

US FOREST SERVICE NORTHWEST MONTANA BACKCOUNTRY AVALANCHE ADVISORY



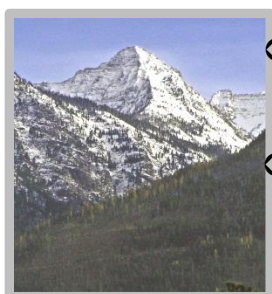
FOR THE GLACIER PARK AND FLATHEAD & KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST AREAS

Avalanche advisory does not apply to developed ski areas

Issue Date: 5 AM, Friday, December 16, 2011
Valid Until: Midnight, Friday, December 16, 2011
Next Update: Friday, December 23, 2011
Issued by: Tony Willits

This advisory is a product of the US Forest Service, US Dept. of Agriculture. Along with other snow and avalanche information, it is originally posted at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/flathead>. An audio summary is available via telephone at 406-257-8402

All Mountain Ranges



7,500 ft. elevation



5,000 ft.



Avalanche Danger Summary

2 - Moderate : 5,000 to 7,500 ft. elevation on steep, open terrain

1 - Low : below 5,000

AVALANCHE – INSTABILITY DESCRIPTION

All Mountain Ranges - 5,000 to 7,500 ft. elevation

Danger Level	2 - Moderate
Confidence	Good
Travel Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heightened avalanche conditions on steep, open slopes and gullies Evaluate snow and terrain carefully
Likelihood of Avalanches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural avalanche unlikely Human triggered avalanches possible
Avalanche Size & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small avalanches in specific areas or Larger avalanches in isolated areas Concern is steep, open slopes and gullies lacking vegetative and terrain anchors

AVALANCHE – INSTABILITY DESCRIPTION

All Mountain Ranges - below 5,000 ft. elevation

Danger Level	1 - LOW
Confidence	Good
Travel Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally safe avalanche conditions exist Watch for unstable snow on isolated terrain features
Likelihood of Avalanches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both natural and human triggered avalanche unlikely
Avalanche Size & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very small avalanches in widespread areas or Small avalanche in isolated areas

Because of the general nature of this advisory message, each backcountry party will always need to make their own time and site specific avalanche hazard evaluations. This advisory best describes conditions at the time of its issuance. As time passes avalanche and snow conditions may change, sometimes quite rapidly. Elevation and geographic distinctions used are approximate and transition zones between hazards exist.

Recent Mountain Weather

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday –Thursday ---A dry air mass stalled over region 	
Precipitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry at most all locations • Scattered light snowfall on Monday and Thursday 	
Temperature	Flathead Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temp's below freezing
	Kootenai Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temps below freezing except brief warm up on Saturday 12/10
Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winds have been very light – 0-5MPH, light amounts of new snow from Monday and Thursday are available for transport • 	

Field Observation Locations

Thursday, 12-15-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whoopee-Hiatt Divide, 6000' E aspect 40 degrees, West Cabinet Range, 15 miles S of Troy • Noisy Basin, 7000 ' NW aspect 37 degrees, Swan Range, NE of Bigfork
Observer Report Locations	
Tuesday, 12-15-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No reports received

Avalanches Observed

No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None observed • Shallow snowpack with an abundance of vegetative and terrain anchors is currently found widespread over the region
----	---

Instability Concern / Avalanche Problem	Level of Concern	Most★★★ Less★★ Least ★		
New Storm or Near Surface Snow	★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New snow loading on Thursday was scattered and light with new accumulations from 2 to 10 cm • Surface sluffs just below ridge tops at Noisy location on N and NW aspects 		
Wind Loading	★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Below 7,500 ft. elevation Thursday, light to moderate ridge and mountain top winds from W and SW • 2 to 20 cms of new and soft modified snow is available for wind transport 		
Recent or Persistent Buried Weak Layer	★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak interfaces observed between new snow or soft modified snow and melt freeze crusts in the top 10 to 20 cms 		
Spring Wet Snow or Melt-Freeze		Not applicable		
Rain-on-Snow		Not applicable		
Loose Snow		None observed		
Other Concerns				

Weather Forecast[Current NWS Backcountry Forecast](#)

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High pressure forecasted to strengthen into Saturday, supporting a drier, warmer air mass • A weak disturbance and an increase in ridge top winds effecting NW, N, NE & E aspects, is expected Sunday, but little precipitation is anticipated
Precipitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant precip forecasted
Temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daytime temperatures in the high 20's to low 30'sF • Nighttime temperature inversions with colder conditions in the valleys (mid teens's to mid 30's F)vs higher elevations (mid 20's F) •
Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light – 0-10MPH, mostly SW'erly

Avalanche Outlook

Trend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Into next week the avalanche danger is expected to remain near current levels
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With an abundance of vegetative and terrain anchors coupled with a shallow, mostly stable snowpack
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In spite of the relative widespread stability currently always carry and know how to use avalanche safety equipment</i> • <i>Watch for a possible rapid change in weather conditions beyond forecast amounts</i> • <i>Be alert that if a slope is open enough to ski or highmark currently it is very likely an established avalanche path.</i> • <i>Check out the site specific snow stability before jumping in or on</i> • <i>Know that shallow snowpacks are notorious for producing trauma injury and death, washing victims over cliffs and into rocks.</i>

Upcoming Events

Flathead Nat'l Forest will also be presenting our advanced public avalanche awareness safety training for skiers, snowshoers, snowboarders, and mountaineers over the first two weeks of January, 2012. The program is a four night lecture series with two Saturday field sessions. Lecture dates are Tuesdays and Thursdays, January 3,5,10,&12. The all-day Saturday field sessions are January 7&14. Lecture location and time is the same as the weather workshop above.